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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 05 ZAGREB 02986

SIPDIS

AMCONSUL MUNICH
USLO SKOPJE
AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 ZAGREB 002986

SIPDIS

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU
USVIENNA ALSO FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 12356: DECL: 8/5/00

TAGS:

SUBJECT: CROATIA SITREP NO. 9 - AUGUST 5, 2130 HRS LOCAL

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

SUMMARY

2. BENKOVAC FELL TO HV FORCES AT 17:55 LOCAL.
PRESIDENTIAL CHIEF OF STAFF HRVOJE SARINIC EXPRESSED
CONDITIONAL GOC INTEREST IN STOPPING ALL MILITARY
OPERATIONS AND CONDUCTING POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH SERB
INTERLOCUTORS, INCLUDING BABIC. HE SAID THAT THE GOC
CONSIDERED SERBS ATTACKS ON DUBROVNIK AND EASTERN SLAVONIA
TO BE ONLY PROVOCATIONS, AND THAT THE HV WOULD NOT BE
DRAWN INTO OPENING ANOTHER FRONT WITH THE SERBS. SERB
FORCES WERE PRESENTING MOST RESISTANCE IN SECTOR NORTH,
AROUND SLUNJ, AND THE HV EXPECTS TO HAVE THIS TERRITORY
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UNDER CONTROL WITHIN A FEW DAYS. THE MOD CLAIMS TO HAVE
FINISHED OVER EIGHTY PERCENT OF ITS OBJECTIVE BY 1800
LOCAL TIME. GENERAL CERMAK NAMED BY TUDJMAN TO BE THE
CHIEF MILITARY COMMANDER IN THE NEWLY-LIBERATED TERRITORY.
END SUMMARY.

KNIN FALLS

3. SARINIC CONFIRMED TO THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE HV NOW
HAD COMPLETE CONTROL OVER KNIN. HE CLAIMED THAT THE KNIN
CIVIL AUTHORITIES HAD FLED THE CITY IN A PANIC AND HAD NO
TIME TO CARRY WITH THEM OR DESTROY GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
AND RECORDS, ALTHOUGH HE SAID IT WAS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHAT
REMAINED. SERB RESISTANCE WAS STILL HOLDING OUT IN THE
TOWNS OF BENKOVAC AND OBROVAC IN WESTERN PART OF SECTOR
SOUTH. HOWEVER, HE CONFIRMED THAT HV FORCES HAD
PENETRATED TO THE CROATIAN INTERNATIONAL BORDER AND HAD
LINKED UP WITH ABH FIFTH CORPS TROOPS AT KOSTAJNICA.
(NOTE: THE HV COMMANDER IN OGULIN SAID THAT HIS FORCES
PLANNED TO LINK UP WITH FIFTH CORPS NEAR RAKOVICA ON
AUGUST 6.) EARLIER IN THE DAY, SARINIC SAID HE HAD
PROMISED SRSG AKASHI AND UNPF COMMANDER JANVIER THAT UNCRO
WOULD BE ALLOWED TO PATROL KNIN AND CONTINUE OPERATIONS
THERE, BUT ONLY AFTER SAFETY CONDITIONS ALLOWED UNCRO TO
RETURN. HE INSISTED THAT IT WOULD BE PSYCHOLOGICALLY
IMPORTANT TO THE REMAINING SERBS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY TO MAINTAIN A PRESENCE IN THE TOWN.

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THE ABDIC FACTOR

4. SARINIC CLAIMED THAT OVER SIX HUNDRED TROOPS LOYAL TO

RENEGADE MUSLIM LEADER FIKRET ABDIC HAD QUICKLY SHIFTED LOYALTIES TO THE HV AND THE ABH 5TH CORPS AS THESE TWO ARMIES CONSOLIDATED THEIR GAINS IN SECTOR NORTH AND THE BIHAC POCKET. ABDIC, SARINIC OPINED, WAS A "NORMAL GUY, NOT A FUNDAMENTALIST," DESPITE HIS OPPORTUNISTIC ASSOCIATION WITH MARTIC. HE POSED NO PROBLEMS FOR THE GOC, PER SE. YET THE GOC COULD NOT RISK ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH IZETBEGOVIC ON ABDIC'S ACCOUNT. HOWEVER, IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH TUDJMAN, SARINIC WAS SURPRISED THAT IZETBEGOVIC APPEARED TO BE FLEXIBLE CONCERNING ABDIC.

UNCRO TROOP PRESENCE AND CASUALTIES

15. SARINIC COULD NOT CONFIRM THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATHS OF TWO CZECH UNMOS EARLIER TODAY. HE HAD HIMSELF ONLY LEARNED THE NEWS FROM AKASHI A FEW HOURS EARLIER. REGARDING THE DANISH UNMO KIA, SARINIC SAID HE HAD CREDIBLE, THOUGH UNCONFIRMED, INFORMATION THAT

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	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01
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O 052234Z AUG 95
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6761
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
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NSC WASHDC
NATO EU COLLECTIVE
SECDEF WASHDC//ISA/ISP//
AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
HQ JTF PP NAPLES IT//CA/POLAD//
COMSIXTHFLT //N2//
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ3/ECJ4/ECJ5/ECPOLAD//
JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE//J3/J4/J5/POLAD//
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE//DO/LG/XOX/IN/POLAD//
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THE DANE HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY THE SERBS AND THE HV HAD FOUND HIM WITH HIS HANDS TIED WITH WIRE. TH

E "ARSK" HAD

USED HIM AS A HUMAN SHIELD DURING THE HV ATTACK ON THEM. SARINIC SAID THE DANE HAD DIED DURING THE RESCUE FLIGHT BACK TO THE MASH AT PLES0 AIRPORT IN ZAGREB. A POLISH UNMO (KOVALESKY - NFI) HAD DIED IN SERB-HELD TERRITORY, SARINIC SAID, BECAUSE THE SERBS HAD REFUSED TO ALLOW HIM ON A UN HELICOPTER TO PLES0 THAT THE UN HAD ARRANGED AND CLEARED WITH THE CROATS.

16. AMBASSADOR GALBRAITH UNDERScoreD THAT THE SECURITY OF UN FORCES WAS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. HV FORCES MUST GO AROUND UN OBSERVATION POSTS (UNOPS), HE SAID, NOT THROUGH THEM. SARINIC RESPONDED THAT AKASHI AND JANVIER HAD ASKED THAT UN COMPOUNDS NOT BE
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VIOLATED. THESE COMPOUNDS NOW HELD FOUR HUNDRED UN PERSONNEL AND THREE HUNDRED SERBS SEEKING REFUGE. THESE SERBS WOULD BE FREE TO REMAIN IN CROATIA OR LEAVE FOR SERB-HELD B-H IF THEY SO WISHED. THE CROATIAN AMNESTY LAW WOULD APPLY TO ALL WHO STAYED EXCEPT THOSE "SPECIAL CASES" GUILTY OF WAR CRIMES, HE ASSERTED. THE UN WOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE ITS WORK IN KNIN, HE CONTINUED, AS SOON AS THE SECURITY RISK SITUATION ALLOWED THEM TO DO SO. KNIN WAS CURRENTLY UNDER A GENERAL AIR SIREN WARNING, HE SAID, BECAUSE SINCE 1430 LOCAL TIME, IT WAS BEING SHELLED FROM OBROVAC AND BENKOVAC.

17. SARINIC INSISTED THAT NOT A SINGLE HV SHELL HAD HIT THE KNIN UN COMPOUND. IT WAS LOCATED OUT OF TOWN, AND THE HV FORCES HAD STRICT INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO TOUCH IT. HE SAID ONE SHELL HAD FALLEN IN FRONT OF THE COMPOUND ENTRANCE. CONFLICTING INFORMATION CONTINUED TO ARRIVE CONCERNING THE SITUATION INSIDE KNIN. IN SARINIC'S TALKS WITH THE UNPF LEADERS, GENERAL JANVIER HAD SAID THAT BODIES HAD LINED THE STREETS OF KNIN, YET AKASHI HAD CLAIMED THAT THERE WERE ONLY A FEW CASUALTIES.

CONTINUED MILITARY ACTIVITY

18. THE SERBS CONTINUED TO MOUNT THE STRONGEST RESISTANCE IN SECTOR NORTH, HE SAID, BETWEEN GLINA AND PETRINJA. HE EXPECTED OPERATIONS THERE TO CONTINUE ANOTHER 24-48 HOURS. ONE DOZEN TANKS STILL HELD OUT IN THE AREA. THEY WERE UNABLE TO MOVE DUE TO MECHANICAL FAILURES, YET THEIR
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CANNONS STILL FUNCTIONED WELL. TWO HV INFANTRY ATTACKS HAD BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL AT TAKING THEM OUT, SO THE ARMY HAD SURROUNDED THE TANKS AND WOULD NOT RISK FURTHER INFANTRY CASUALTIES.

19. AKASHI AND JANVIER HAD PROPOSED TO SARINIC A CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AND WOULD PRESENT A PAPER TO SARINIC LATER THIS EVENING AT 1800. SARINIC SAID THE GOC WOULD ONLY ACCEPT PROPOSALS THAT INCLUDED THE COMPLETE SURRENDER AND DISARMAMENT OF RSK FORCES IN BOTH THE SECTORS. SARINIC WAS PREPARED TO STOP ALL MILITARY ACTIVITY TONIGHT IF THE SERBS WOULD AGREE TO THESE CONDITIONS.

BABIC AND POSSIBLE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

10. IN A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION EARLIER IN THE DAY, MINISTER OF DEFENSE SUSAK REQUESTED THAT THE AMBASSADOR PLAY A ROLE IN CEASEFIRE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SERBS. AMBASSADOR GALBRAITH THEN OUTLINED TO SARINIC HIS TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH MILAN BABIC THE DAY BEFORE. SARINIC SAID THAT BABIC COULD HAVE A USEFUL ROLE IN

APPEALING TO ALL REMAINING RSK FORCES IN THE TWO SECTORS

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O 052234Z AUG 95
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6762
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-5PMA/J21//
NSC WASHDC
NATO EU COLLECTIVE
SECDEF WASHDC//ISA/ISP//
AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
HQ JTF PP NAPLES IT//CA/POLAD//
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TO LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS. HOWEVER, HE MAINTAINED THAT THE
GOC WOULD ONLY AGREE TO NEGOTIATE WITH BABIC AS LONG AS
FIGHTING STILL CONTINUED. SHOULD THE "ARSK" NOT SURRENDER
AND THE HV TAKE COMPLETE CONTROL OVER THE TERRITORY
MILITARILY, NEGOTIATIONS WITH BABIC WOULD NO LONGER BE AN
OPTION. THE GOC WOULD THEN SEEK OUT OTHER SERB LEADERS
AND INTERLOCUTORS WHO STILL WISHED TO REMAIN IN THE
SECTOR, SUCH AS VJEKOSLAV DJAKULA IN WESTERN SLAVONIA.

11. BABIC HAD TO BE CONTACTED THAT SAME EVENING ABOUT
CEASEFIRE NEGOTIATIONS, SARINIC INSISTED, FOR THIS IDEA TO
BE AT ALL SUCCESSFUL. THE AMBASSADOR AGREED TO BE THE
POINT OF INITIAL CONTACT WITH BABIC, AND WOULD PLAY AN

ADDITIONAL ROLE AS REQUESTED BY THE PARTIES, SUBJECT TO
WASHINGTON'S APPROVAL. HE INSISTE
D THAT SUCH NEGOTIATIONS
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INCLUDE A POSITIVE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT FOR A WESTERN
KRAJINA WITHIN CROATIA. SARINIC WAS SKEPTICAL ABOUT
BABIC'S ABILITY TO DELIVER ON THE MILITARY FRONT, BUT
AGREED. THE AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED THAT SUCH A SETTLEMENT
MUST MAKE LOCAL SERBS FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE IN THEIR
CHOICE TO REMAIN IN KRAJINA. BABIC WAS AN IDEAL
INTERLOCUTOR BECAUSE HE HAD POPULAR SUPPORT AMONG THE
PEOPLE OF KRAJINA. THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WAS ESSENTIAL IN GAINING THE
CONFIDENCE OF THE LOCAL SERBIAN POPULATION. A POSITIVE
RESOLUTION IN THE KRAJINA ALSO HELD SIGNIFICANT
IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN SECTOR EAST.

12. SARINIC REPLIED THAT CROATIA WOULD BE PREPARED TO
DISCUSS ISSUES OF CIVILIAN AUTHORITY AND CULTURAL
AUTONOMY, AS WELL AS COUNTY TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES. THE
AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT DISCUSSIONS WITH BABIC BE HELD
IN ZAGREB AT A LOCATION OF THE GOC'S CHOOSING, PREFERABLY
NOT IN SECRET. HE SUGGESTED OTHER INTERLOCUTORS THE GOC
MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER MIGHT BE VOJNOVIC, AND RADOVAN
JOVIC, A RECENT USIS IV RECIPIENT. SARINIC URGED THAT
SUCH DISCUSSION START IMMEDIATELY. AS SOON AS MILITARY
ACTION FINISHED, CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE KRAJINA WOULD
CHANGE, AND HE WOULD NO LONGER BE AMENABLE TO HOLDING
DISCUSSIONS WITH BABIC.

KRAJINA MUST RETAIN A SERBIAN POPULATION

13. THE AMBASSADOR INSISTED TO SARINIC THAT THE GOC MAKE
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EVERY EFFORT TO PROTECT THE LOCAL CIVILIAN POPULATION AND
ENSURE THAT CONDITIONS ARE CREATED TO ENCOURAGE THE LOCAL
POPULATION TO STAY. SARINIC REPLIED THAT THE GOC WAS
CONSTRAINED BY PUBLIC OPINION, WHICH WAS CONVINCED "ONE
HUNDRED PERCENT" THAT A MILITARY SOLUTION WAS THE ONLY WAY
TO RESOLVE THE KRAJINA PROBLEM. THE AMBASSADOR POINTED
OUT THAT THE GOC AND THE GOBH NOW HAD THE PERFECT
OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE FACTORS ON THE GROUND TO PAVE THE
WAY FOR A VIABLE PEACE SETTLEMENT IN THE REGION LATER THIS
YEAR.

-

BILDT OUT ON A LIMB

14. SARINIC EXPRESSED SHOCK AND DISMAY AT ICFY SPECIAL
ENVOY CARL BILDT'S STATEMENT EQUATING PRESIDENT TUDJMAN
AND RSK LEADER MARTIC, CHARACTERIZING IT AS "STUPID."
ICFY MUST DEAL WITH CROATIA AND SUCH UNDIPLOMATIC AND
UNPROFESSIONAL STATEMENTS WERE COMPLETELY UNPRODUCTIVE.
HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOC WOULD REFUSE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS
WITH BILDT.

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O 052234Z AUG 95
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6763
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-5PMA/J21//
NSC WASHDC
NATO EU COLLECTIVE
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SECTOR EAST PROVOCATIONS

15. SARINIC REMAINED CONCERNED ABOUT "ARSK" SHELLING ON OSIJEK AND VINKOVCI. HE INSISTED THAT THE HV CONSIDERED THESE ATTACKS TO BE ONLY PROVOCATIONS, AND WOULD NOT RETALIATE. HE CLAIMED THAT OVER 600 SHELLS HAD FALLEN ON VINKOVCI AND 6 ON OSIJEK SINCE THE START OF THE HV'S ACTION. HE SHOWED US AN UNCONFIRMED AND UNRELIABLE MEDIA REPORT FROM BANJA LUKA AS OF 1300 LOCAL ON AUGUST 5 THAT THE "ARSK" HAD GAINED CONTROL OF NUSTAR, SIX KILOMETERS NORTH OF VINKOVCI.

DUBROVNIK AND TREBINJE

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16. CILIPI AND KONAVALJE CONTINUED TO BE SHELLED BY THE BSA, SARINIC CONTINUED. THE WATER PIPELINE TO HERCEG-NOVI IN MONTENEGRO HAD BEEN PARTIALLY DESTROYED IN THIS SHELLING AND THE GOC COULD NOT REPAIR IT UNTIL THE SHELLING STOPPED. SARINIC SAID THE GOC WOULD NOT

"BLACKMAIL" THE SERBS WITH WATER. AS IN SECTOR EAST, THE HV WOULD NOT REACT TO SUCH PROVOCATIONS UNLESS THE SERBS MADE GOOD ON THEIR CLAIMS TO DESTROY THE ENTIRE HISTORICAL CENTER OF DUBROVNIK. IT WAS NOT IN CROATIAN INTERESTS TO OPEN ANOTHER FRONT, HE REITERATED.

SET UP OF MILITARY AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES

117. MINISTER-AT-LARGE MAJDAK WOULD CONTINUE TO BE THE GOC INTRA-GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATOR OF ACTIVITIES FOR WESTERN KRAJINA, JUST AS HE WAS FOR WESTERN SLAVONIA, SARINIC INFORMED US. AT 1430, HE SAID, PRESIDENT TUDJMAN HAD NAMED GENERAL CERMAK

AS THE "KNIN COMMANDER" AND HAD ASKED HIM TO CONSOLIDATE POLITICAL-MILITARY CONTROL OF THE SECTORS. SARINIC SAID AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THIS POSITION WOULD BE FORTHCOMING LATER TODAY. (NOTE: IT WAS NOT ANNOUNCED AT THE MOD PRESS CONFERENCE AT 1800.)

LATE DEVELOPMENTS

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118. AT A TELEVISED MOD PRESS CONFERENCE AT 1800 LOCAL, THE SPOKESMAN, GENERAL IVAN TOLJ, CONFIRMED THAT BENKOVAC HAD FALLEN AT 17:55. HE SAID THE HV OPERATION WAS PROCEEDING TWICE AS FAST AS THEY HAD EXPECTED AND THAT EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE TASK HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. THE HV HAD CUT SEVERAL SERB COMMUNICATION LINES (DRNIS-KNIN, OBROVAC-GRACAC, GOSPIC-LJUBOVO, GOSPIC-GRACAC, AND DUBICA-KOSTAJNICA). THE HV HAD ENGAGED THE FORCES OF THE 7TH KNIN CORPS (10,000 TROOPS) AND 15TH ILJICKI CORPS (15,000 TROOPS) IN THE SOUTH, AND THE 21ST AND 39TH CORPS IN THE NORTH. TOLJ OPINED THAT "TODAY WAS AN HISTORICAL DAY FOR CROATIA, EUROPE AND THE WORLD."

119. REFUSING TO GIVE NUMBERS, TOLJ INSISTED THAT THE HV HAD SUFFERED MINIMAL CASUALTIES, AND DID NOT HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW MANY SERB TROOPS HAD FLED TO BOSNIA. THE HV COMMANDER IN OGULIN TOLD POLOFF AND DATT THAT 40 PERCENT OF HIS CASUALTIES WERE CAUSED BY MINEFIELDS. HE CONFIRMED THAT SERB GUERRILLA ACTIONS CONTINUED IN THE SLUNJ AREA OF SECTOR NORTH, BUT INSISTED THAT THE HV WAS UNCONCERNED THAT THE "ARSK" AND THE BSA MIGHT LAUNCH A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE FROM BOSNIA IN THE COMING DAYS. HE REPEATED SARINIC'S ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF THE DANISH PEACEKEEPER. HV FORCES, HE MAINTAINED, WERE UNDER STRICT

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FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6764
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-5PMA/J21//
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ORDERS NOT TO HARM OR TARGET UN PERSONNEL OR LOCAL
CIVILIANS. (NOTE: THE HV COMMANDER IN OGULIN CONFIRMED
THIS TO US. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE HV SUFFERED
CASUALTIES WHILE AVOIDING UN POSITIONS. HE ALSO SAID THAT
THE "ARSK" WAS MIXING CIVILIANS WITH MILITARY UNITS AS
THEY RETREATED AND BECAUSE OF THAT HIS UNITS WERE AVOIDING
CUTTING MAIN LINES OF COMMUNICATION, FOR NOW). TOLJ WOULD
NOT CONFIRM THAT ALL THE ROCKET LAUNCHERS IN SECTOR NORTH
HAD BEEN TAKEN OUT, BUT SAID THAT IN THIS QUICKLY CHANGING
SITUATION, THE "POSSIBILITIES WERE SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED"
OF SUCH ROCKETS REACHING ZAGREB. SUCH TARGETING WOULD BE
"CRAZY," MILITARILY INSIGNIFICANT, AND THEREFORE ONLY A
WAR CRIME.

20. TOLJ CLAIMED THE HV HAD WANTED TO OPEN TODAY TO
JOURNALISTS THE ROAD TO KOSTAVICA, WHERE THE HV AND 5TH
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CORPS HAD LINKED UP, BUT DID NOT DO SO DUE TO SECURITY
CONCERNS. HE HOPED THAT JOURNALISTS WOULD BE ALLOWED INTO
THE SECTOR SOON. WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT THE MILITARY
SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS LINK-UP, TOLJ SAID "NOTHING WOULD
EVER BE THE SAME AGAIN." ANY DREAMS OF A GREATER SERBIA
HAD "FALLEN INTO THE WATER."

21. SARAJEVO MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

GALBRAITH

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